

## THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN

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### Introduction:

We see that It has been mandated in the Constitution of Pakistan to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-16 years and enhance adult literacy. With the Introduction Of 18th constitutional amendment the concurrent list which comprised of 47 subjects was abolished and these subjects, including education, were transferred to federating units as a move towards provincial autonomy. The system of education includes all institutions that are involved in delivering formal education (public and private, for-profit and nonprofit, onsite or virtual instruction) and their faculties, students, physical infrastructure, resources and rules. In a broader definition, the system also includes the institutions that are directly involved in financing, managing, operating or regulating such institutions (like government ministries and regulatory bodies, central testing organizations, textbook boards and accreditation boards). The rules and regulations that guide the individual and institutional interactions within the set up are also part of the education system. The education system of Pakistan is comprised of 260,903 institutions and is facilitating 41,018,384 students with the help of 1,535,461 teachers. The system includes 180,846 public institutions and 80,057 private institutions. Hence 31% educational institutes are run by the private sector while 69% are public institutes.

### Problems:

The issues lead to the comprehension of the problems which are faced in the development of the education system and the promotion of literacy. The study outlines seven major problems such as:

1) **Lack of Proper Planning:** Pakistan is a signatory to MDGs and EFA goals. However, it seems that it will not be able to achieve these international commitments because of financial management issues and constraints to achieve the MDGs and EFA goals.

2) **Social constraints:** It is important to realize that the problems which hinder the provision of education are not just due to issues of management by the government but some of them are deeply rooted in the social and cultural orientation of the people. Overcoming the latter is difficult and would require a change in the attitude of the people until then universal primary education is difficult to achieve.

3) **Gender gap:** Major factors that hinder enrolment rates of girls include poverty, cultural constraints, illiteracy of parents and parental concerns about safety and mobility of their daughters. Society's emphasis on girl's modesty, protection and early marriages may limit family's willingness to send them to school. Enrolment of rural girls is 45% lower than that of urban girls; while for boys the difference is 10% only, showing that the gender gap is an important factor.

4) **Cost of education:** The economic cost is higher in private schools, but these are located in richer settlements only. The paradox is that private schools are better but not everywhere and government schools ensure equitable access but do not provide quality education.

5) **War on Terror:** Pakistan's engagement in the war against terrorism also affected the promotion of literacy campaign. The militants targeted schools and students; several educational institutions were blown up, teachers and students were killed in Balochistan, KPK and FATA. This may have to contribute not as much as other factors, but this remains an important factor.

6) **Funds for Education:** Pakistan spends 2.4% GDP on education. At the national level, 89% education expenditure comprises of current expenses such as teachers' salaries, while only 11% comprises of development expenditure which is not sufficient to raise the quality of education.

7) **Technical Education:** Sufficient attention has not been paid to the technical and vocational education in Pakistan. The number of technical and vocational training institutes is not sufficient and many are deprived of infrastructure, teachers and tools for training. The population of a state is one of the main elements of its national power. It can become an asset once it is skilled. Unskilled population means more jobless people in the country, which affects the national development negatively. Therefore, technical education needs priority handling by the government.

Poverty, law and order situation, natural disasters, budgetary constraints, lack of access, poor quality, equity, and governance have also contributed to fewer enrolments.

### **An analysis of the issues and problems suggest that:**

The official data shows the allocation of funds for educational projects but there is no mechanism which ensures the proper expenditure of those funds on education

- The existing infrastructure is not being properly utilized in several parts of the country.
- There are various challenges that include expertise, institutional and capacity issues, forging national cohesion, uniform standards for textbook development, and quality assurance.
- The faculty hiring process is historically known to be politicized. It is because of this that the quality of teaching suffers and even more so when low investments are made in teachers' training. As a result, teachers are not regular and their time at school is not as productive as it would be with a well-trained teacher.
- Inside schools, there are challenges which include a shortage of teachers, teacher absenteeism, missing basic facilities and lack of friendly environment.
- Out of school challenges include shortage of schools, distance – especially for females, insecurity, poverty, cultural norms, parents are reluctant or parents lack awareness

### **Solutions:**

- There is a need for implementation of national education policy and vision 2030 education goals. An analysis of education policy suggests that at the policy level there are several admirable ideas, but practically there are some shortcomings also.
- It may not be possible for the government at the moment to implement a uniform education system in the country, but a uniform curriculum can be introduced in educational institutes of the country. This will provide equal opportunity to the students of rural areas to compete with students of urban areas in the job market.
- Since the majority of the Pakistani population resides in rural areas and the access to education is a major problem for them, it seems feasible that a balanced approach for formal and informal education be adopted. Government as well as the non-government sector should work together to promote education in rural areas.
- The government should take measures to get school buildings vacated which are occupied by feudal lords of Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab. Efforts should be made to ensure that proper education is provided in those schools.

- The federal government is paying attention to the vocational and technical training, but it is important to make the already existing vocational and technical training centres more efficient so that skilled youth could be produced.
- Since education is a provincial subject, the provincial education secretariats need to be strengthened. Special policy planning units should be established in provinces' education departments for the implementation of educational policies and formulation of new policies whenever needed. The provincial education departments need to work out the financial resources required for realizing the compliance of Article 25-A.
- Technical education should be made a part of secondary education. Classes for carpentry, electrical, and other technical education must be included in the curriculum.
- Providing economic incentives to the students may encourage the parents to send their children to school and may help in reducing the dropout ratio.
- The local government system is helpful in promoting education and literacy in the country. In local government system, the funds for education would be spent on a need basis by the locality.
- Corruption in education departments is one of the factors for poor literacy in the country. An effective monitoring system is needed in education departments.
- For any system to work it is imperative that relevant structures are developed. Legislation and structure should be framed to plan for the promotion of education in the country. After the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment the education has become a provincial subject, therefore, the provinces should form legislations and design educational policies which ensure quality education.
- Unemployment of educated men and women is a major concern for Pakistan. There should be career counselling of the pupils in schools so that they have an understanding of the job market and they can develop their skills accordingly.
- Counselling of parents is required so that they can choose a career for their child which is market-friendly.
- There are two approaches to acquiring education: First, which is being followed by many in Pakistan is to get an education to earn bread and butter. The second approach is to get an education for the sake of personal development and learning. This approach is followed by affluent and economically stable people who send their children to private schools and abroad for education. The problem arises when non-affluent families send their children to private schools, and universities. This aspiration for sending children for higher education is wrong because the country does not need managers and officers only. There are several other jobs where people are needed. Hence the mindset of sending one's children to university only for becoming officers and managers needs to be changed.

### **Conclusion:-**

The reforms required in the education system of Pakistan cannot be done by the government alone, public-private participation and a mix of formal as well as non-formal education can pull out the majority of country's population from illiteracy. Similarly, to make the youth of the country an asset, attention should also be paid to vocational and technical training.